

# PRINCIPAL'S REPORT 2010

## ST ITA'S SCHOOL BOARD

### POLICY DEVELOPMENT

A major sign of a healthy and developing school community is its capacity to renew itself. Such renewal involves critical reflection by the community on its essential purpose as it encounters constant change and new challenges, a review and validation of the authenticity of its current practice and a commitment to continuous improvement. As part of this process of school renewal we entered into the third year of our current renewal cycle and reflected on the following components of the Internal School Review Instrument: *Assessment of Student Learning, Reporting, Gifted Education, Partnerships, and Budgeting and Finance*. Data gathered from parent and staff surveys and focused reflection by the staff on each component identified areas of strength and areas for development which will inform our school's annual goal setting within our Strategic Renewal Plan. The feedback from the survey report conducted by ACER (Australian Council for Educational Research) in March this year of parents of Year 3 and Year 6 students was very positive of the teaching and learning, and the supportive and welcoming community culture at St Ita's. Parents also acknowledged that our school strongly reflects Catholic values and principles.

After consultation with students, staff and parents a Student Leadership Policy was developed and endorsed by the School Board. This policy reflects the shared leadership model which provides opportunities for every student in Year Seven to take on a role of responsibility. The Student Leadership Policy can be viewed on the school website [www.stitasduttonpark.qld.edu.au](http://www.stitasduttonpark.qld.edu.au)

### DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

The announcement by the Commonwealth Government to commit \$14.7 billion over three years to provide new facilities and refurbishments in Australian schools to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century students and teachers through the Building the Education Revolution (BER) Program instigated fast tracking of the St Ita's school master plan. Mr Fred Jacuzzi from HBJ Architects was appointed Architect and Project Manager for this next phase of building which will include a Library, Learning Support Centre, four classrooms, undercover outdoor play facility and amenities block. Badge Constructions has been appointed to build these facilities. Construction has commenced and completion date will be March 2011.

The school swimming pool was rebuilt using NSP funding and two classrooms were completed for the Year Seven students with State Capital Assistance Funding. These classrooms are fitted with ducted air-conditioning, data projectors, IWBs and laptop trolleys providing the latest in technology equipment for our students and teachers.

As a result of the generosity of our Parents and Friends Association Phase One of the Jubilee Playground Project was completed with the construction of a large climbing frame and covered sandpit area. These facilities are greatly enjoyed by our students.

## **CURRICULUM**

This year there has been a curriculum emphasis on developing Literacy skills and resourcing. A significant number of staff meetings have been dedicated to providing professional learning for staff in the areas of Spelling, Reading and Technology. The purchase of reading books for the Early Years has increased significantly the access to relevant and stimulating reading materials.

Another pedagogical focus has been the deepening understanding of inquiry learning. This model of learning has been incorporated into the teaching of numeracy within the iMaths program across all year levels. We believe this will prepare us for the introduction of the National Maths curriculum which will be based on the inquiry learning model. There has been positive feedback from teachers and students who are using the investigation units from this program.

Students who demonstrate talents in particular areas were given the opportunity to experience enrichment workshops in the areas of technology, writing and mathematics through the *Days of Excellence* Programs and *Kids Connect* Technology Conference.

A visual arts teacher was employed this year and the students have developed their creative talents through this program with some outstanding successes in local art competitions. The *Get Set Go* program has provided gross motor and ball skills activities for students in Yrs P-3 and swimming lessons for Yrs P-7. The programs have been well received by the staff and students and are a demonstration of our continued commitment to promoting the physical wellbeing of our students.

As part of our review of the *Vision for Learning* component of the Internal School Review Instrument the staff expressed a desire to develop, in consultation with the community, a *Vision for Learning* at St Ita's that identifies the aspirations for learners in our community, that clearly enunciates the goals and standards relating to student learning, is informed by current research on learning and is beneficial to students through the provision of high quality learning experiences and aligns strongly with our current Vision and Mission, policies and practices. This desire for continuous professional learning and reflection is an indicator of the professionalism and strong commitment that our teachers have to the students as learners at St Ita's. Professional Learning Days have been used to work with an Education Officer Curriculum from Brisbane Catholic Education to develop our *Vision for Learning*. It is envisaged that this document will be available for discussion and feedback early in 2011 and will identify current practices and inform future needs for professional learning to improve student outcomes.

## **CONCLUSION**

I acknowledge the continued support and commitment of the St Ita's community who contribute in so many ways through the various P&F fundraising and social events. It is a privilege to be part of this community and I thank sincerely the members of the School Board for the support that you have graciously bestowed on me and for your wisdom as we work together in partnership to make just decisions to not only move our school forward but also to retain and nurture those values that are an important part of the culture of our school.